1: Honigmann K-5 (1943-1965) 1949 ND12 hhane ND12

inheritances are poorly formulated. The amount of inheritable goods is one, the most valu- 428
ble being the trap line, but no cases of real property inheritance were corded. Indians spoke of their children or their sons-in-law receiving a trap line but in none had anyone attempted to make provisions for such inheritance. Since men usually set up residence in the wife's country, it is reasonably likely that inheritance would fall : either a man's daughters or to his sons-in-law. Thus, Old John's son-in-law, upon the father-in-law died, he would obtain ownership of the trap line which he was now using, after him the line would go to his brother-in-law, or probably, to his brothers, who would then continue to support his wife. This, however, was largely wishful thinking. Old Jim himself felt that his trap line should go to both his sons-in-law. His statement, however, was not intended as a testamentary disposition, and there is no evidence for believing he was much concerned with the matter. River Joe's attitudes regarding the uxorilocal residence of his children may be resulted in pointing to one individual's desire to insure a inheritance of his trap line by his children. Such an expectation contrasts with Old Jim's readiness to have his property pass to sons-in-law and emphasizes the unilateral pattern of inheritance. It must be remembered, however, that Old John has no sons and by a fifteen year old unmarried daughter. He also has two sons-in-law already trapping on a line, whereas those of River Joe's sons-in-law have set themselves up independently.*

Other goods left by a deceased are generally kept by the surviving spouse who may sell them or apportion them among her children according to sex, a woman objects going to girls, and a man's to boys. Inherited property on disposal of no value only dogs, guns, traps, snowshoes, tools, jewelry, and clothing. A deceased child's possessions, including children, are divided among the siblings. No report was heard of disputes over inheritance.

Government

Lacking governmental institutions of their own, the Kaska Indians : subject to the 128
Dominion Government and, depending on their location, to the local government of Yukon Territory or the Province of British Columbia. In the present section we are chiefly interested in the Indian's relationship to these governments. We will emphasize individual's attitudes toward federal and local authority rather than discuss the issues of these authorities in any detail.

The Kaska Indians are, with a few exceptions, wards of the Dominion of Canada. The 657
exceptions are the relatively few women who, having legally married white men, were enfranchised as citizens and the one or two young men who have had themselves removed from the "Indian list," i.e., successfully petitioned for the status of citizenship. Such individuals often deny that they are Indians and emphasize their equal or superior status.

In general, the people regard the dominion, government, as a "force" whose function 641
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* In a letter dated January 6, 1949, D. O. Rollin, Game Commissioner of British Columbia states, "Should the father of a trapper die without making any provisions with regard to the transfer of his line, then the line and its assets automatically come under the control of the Game Commissioner for the district, and generally such officer assigns the office and his trapline residence to a relative of the deceased trapper, or he sells the permission to sell the trap line and equipment because in this way some revenue derived therefrom may be turned over the Estate." In Yukon Territory, where trap lines are not registered, inheritance following death is probably decided by the Game Conservation Officer, who refer to local sentiment.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

641 are manifold. Thus, referring to the impending visit of the forestry inspector from White-
183 horse, Edward Prince once remarked that everything has a boss: "People have boss, guns have boss, even stick [that is, timber] have boss!" To understand the attitudes of the Indian toward governmental authority, the significance of that word, "boss," must be thoroughly understood.

183 Within the native community, no man can exercise absolute power over any other adult.
621 Parents are "boss their children," and it is even said that a man is "boss his wife," but the authority of these roles is not arbitrary and rarely abused. Furthermore, between adults authority has no meaning. An individual responds to the originatives of another individual only when he stands to gain by such submission or when he cannot tactfully refuse agreement without endangering the harmony of his relationship to the other person. Obedience of an adult to the originatives of another member of the Indian community never occurs because the originator possesses a status which of itself requires submission. Between Indians of equal status, that is, of relatively the same degree of maturity and of the same sex, a thorough-going *laissez faire* prevails. Considered by itself, the Indian community is an atomistic society in which every adult claims autonomy and independence. For example, Old Man once sent a message to his neighbor, Louis Moses, asking the latter to join him in a moose hunt. Louis went on the hunt but almost immediately decided to turn back, because he was worried about his infant son's health. When apprised of this decision, Old Man said in effect: "It's up to you. I'm an old man and I can't see to shoot moose. I hoped we would hunt together but you do what's right. It's up to you." These last words, "Up to you," are frequently heard when adults discuss plans and come to a disagreement. A person with richer experience may state his reasons for disapproving of a projected course of action, but if a younger man does not choose to heed the advice, the matter will usually be dropped. Obviously there are men who try to make their will prevail, who are dominant and assertive. Such men may hold authority within a group of brothers and their wives, but throughout the rest of the community they are generally disliked.

183 The English verb, "to boss," is used by the Kaska with two different connotations.
[184] When used in the sense of exercising authority it often connotes criticism or disapproval. In its wider meaning, however, the term denotes the right and ability to order and care for an
657 object, animal, place, or person. Usually, as we have indicated, government is conceived of as a boss in the first sense, as a meddling and busybodyish authority whose sovereignty is sometimes even branded as illegitimate. Thus Old Kaska complained vigorously that the governments did not help the Indians. He denied governmental sovereignty over the area, and referred to the legitimate authority of a Ground Boss who would someday soon come to regain his dominion. He Indian admits or accepts the authority of a government to control his drinking. Such authority is perceived as presumptuous and tyrannic. In spite of the prevailing aversion of Kaska social life, it is almost inevitable that any activities of the Dominion and local governments in pursuit of their regulative functions should be resented and productive of anxiety. This situation was especially aggravated during the summer of 1945, when reports reached Lower Post that a wire fence had been erected around the Tahltan Indian Reserve at Telegraph Creek, 150 miles south of Lower Post. Although the ostensible reason for the fence was to demarcate Indian lands and protect

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

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children from the portage road's truck traffic, the Kaska Indians reacted to the fencing by construing it as a move to keep the Tahltan imprisoned on the reserve.

Only so far as such governmental services as aid to indigent Indians, free hospitalization, medical care, and gifts are concerned, do the Kaska accept the political authority of the whites. When these services are found inadequate or are, for any reason, interrupted, resentment is quickly expressed. Old Man reported that a former Indian Agent had given people fish line, nets, and cartridges. Under this agent's administration indigent Indians had also received not only rations, but a nimble winter outfit. Since then two new agents have served the community without giving gifts to the population.[1] Many people therefore feel that the current Indian Agent is misdirecting government money which should go toward the Indians' general welfare. As a result of this chain of circumstances, the current agent is disliked and the governments are in little favor.[2] Louis Mean compared the position of the Kaska to the Indians of the United States. He had heard that in the latter country, the Indian is well treated, receiving adequate medical care as well as treaty money, while in Canada the natives are ignored.[2]

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As far as the individual can be said to conceive of his political status, he is mainly concerned with his rights and privileges as an Indian and inclined to overlook any duties or liabilities to which he may be politically subject. He comprehends government as an agency which is supposed to take care of all the Indians—not only of indigent people—to the extent of protecting their trap lines from encroachment, supplying them with food when game is scarce, and providing medical care and hospital facilities. Education is not as strongly endorsed as these other rights. Furthermore he demands that on the Indian reserves, the people should be immune from government interference. Only in case of misbehavior on the "white reserve" is governmental authority recognized.

183 702

The Indian resents the duty of bearing arms. No Indians were drafted from the Kaska tribes in the course of the second World War, but several threats of conscription were censured, all meeting with decidedly negative reactions from young men. According to Niels, the government did not treat the people well. Consequently the Indians have a hard life and therefore can have no business to fight in the "government's war." Conscription, he opined, should be reserved for people who enjoy nice homes and comfortable living. Little resentment is expressed toward paying taxes on trapped furs. The same paid, however, are quite insignificant when compared to the total value of a catch. Old Man and others pointed out that the Indians were getting no return for these revenues, and again alluded to the former Indian Agent who had made a return to the people in the form of gifts.

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Political authority in the Kaska area is represented by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Provincial Police in British Columbia, and the Indian Agent. This authority is most immediate during the summer, when the community is grouped in Lower Post within

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[1] Incidentally the lesson for applied anthropology seems plain: let the government assume the roles of a protecting and providing host and their legitimacy will be strengthened in native eyes. Actually such a role would be difficult to fulfill, although program could certainly be made, first, by extending some abundant routine and medical care, and, second, by enforcing, through law, the severity of regulations.

[2] In southern British Columbia, west of Fort Nelson, Indians do not receive treaty payments as they have never concluded treaties with the Canadian government.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

by her daughter, Lady Sam, and a foster son, Nitla. With Lady Sam most of the time was her youngest son, Donald. From these relatives Metla received a minimum of care and little companion. Frequently her fire was permitted to go out and rekindled only after her prolonged moaning and shrieking brought attention. Nitla complained several times of being unable to sleep at night or of being awakened by Old Metla's demands for fire. Old Mary too complained of being kept awake by the sick woman's moaning. Because of her lice and uncleanliness, all except Metla's daughter were reluctant to come into contact with the old woman, although on the boat journey to Old Man's place illness and debility made it practically impossible for her to climb into the vessel unassisted. On the boat she sat isolated from the other travelers and most of the time crouched in the prow near the dogs. Early in October everyone in camp left on a hunting trip and abandoned the old woman in camp with only the ethnographer's family. According to Nitla, they went on the hunt only after feeling sure that Old Metla's health was improved, and that she was able to do small things for herself. Four or five days' supply of wood was left, but little food other than sugar, oatmeal, and flour. During this period the old woman once more relapsed into serious illness (perhaps because of too liberally helping herself to sugar, for which she had an overfondness) and was unable to keep her fire going. The wood also became exhausted. Among the last people to return from the hunt was Metla's daughter.

Youth shows little sympathy with the debilities and weaknesses of old age. No courtesies are developed toward the old. So long as a camp contains food, however, a helpless old person will not be allowed to starve. The aged are also entitled to rations provided by the Indian Affairs Branch. Unless there are particularly devoted children, however, it is likely that the standard of living of the very old must go below that of the average member of the society.

Sickness*

Sickness is apt to strike at any point along the life cycle and no classification following old age is solely a matter of convenience. Here we will deal with those aspects of illness which affect the person's interpersonal relations. The Kaska Indian, with rare exceptions, is forced to live in close association with illness, either his own or that of some member of his family. While all illness is not necessarily serious, concern with symptoms occupies a large portion of the adult's attention. Young people, in contrast, often underestimate the seriousness of sickness.

Little concern with the implications of sickness for the future is manifested, even by those men who are most concerned with their symptoms. Yet conspicuous through illness may have serious economic consequences. Illness in the fall, for example, can prevent hunting and frustrate the accumulation of meat for the winter. If serious ill health occurs in the winter it hinders trapping. The following spring, with insufficient fur, a man can do little more than pay off the credit extended to him the previous year before beginning to run up a new and higher debt. Several men were caught in this vicious circle.

The economic burden resulting from a man's sickness must, in greatest part, be borne

* Data used in connection with sickness was greatly aided by the use of Ackerknecht's *On the Collecting of Data Concerning Primitive Medicine* (1947). For other information concerning view of sickness and medicine in Kaska society see below pp. 197-198.

1: Honigmann^ E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

by the individual and his immediate family. A father-in-law and son-in-law may assist each other if poor health strikes, but such assistance is limited to gifts of food or casual labor (cutting a little wood, making an occasional trip to the trap line) and never extends to gifts of money. Problems arising from sickness are shouldered as inevitable, but promote considerable self-pity and despair. A sick person is neither neglected by his spouse or parents nor exceptionally well treated. Illness is generally not catered to, and a sick adult or older child, unless he actively resists, is rarely excused from work. There are, therefore, few satisfactions to be derived from illness, although men often use their symptoms as justifications for inactivity or procrastination. In general people do not remain in bed until they are seriously sick. A patient may sit a great deal or, if an old woman, crouch on the ground, but is slow to lie down.

As far as treatment is concerned, any man or woman may assume the role of therapist, a role conferring little status or prestige. Generally a parent ministers to a child, a husband and wife to each other. There is still a residual belief that certain individuals, particularly older men like Rover Joe, possess supernaturally derived curative power. This belief, however, serves no important function and such reputed shamans are no longer requested to practice. An incident reported by Old Man illustrates contemporary attitudes. Five or six years ago Willy Wiley accidentally shot himself through the hand. The boy's father, Old Wiley, refused to consider Old Man's confession to send the boy outside for medical treatment. "Fortune gonna heal it," Old Wiley said, referring to the concept of supernatural power. Old Man replied: "Fortune not gonna help." The latter's opinion prevailed, and Willy was flown to Fort St. John, where the injury was successfully treated. In native therapy, medicine is rarely forced upon an unwilling patient and even adolescents are usually permitted to control their own treatment. Thus Old Man reported that his daughter, Louisa, had been prescribed "T. B. medicine" by the Canadian Air Force physician at Watson Lake Airport. The medicine was given to Old Man with instructions that the girl take it daily. "Doctor tell me, 'Maybe her take it.'" Nevertheless Old Man left it up to Louisa to treat herself. "I don't think she take it yet," he remarked several months later.[9]

The most important therapy comes from outside the Indian community. Since they were in the area, the Roman Catholic missionaries have dispensed a limited amount of simple medicines, and white trappers also from time to time provide free aid and simple remedies for Indians encountered in the bush. During 1944 and the greater part of 1945, highly qualified medical therapy together with limited hospital facilities were available from Canadian and United States Army physicians, doctors, and nurses who were stationed at Watson Lake Airport to serve the air forces. The facilities for such care were readily used by the Indians until they were withdrawn in the fall of 1945. Several times Canadian and United States doctors made unofficial visits to Lower Post, where they advised patients who sought them out. In January 1945, an United States Army physician parachuted from a plane into Beaver River, to help curb a dysentery outbreak that has already claimed the lives of several children. When his work was done, Indians guided him out of the bush to the Alaska Highway.

[9] Information received during the winter of 1948-49 revealed Louisa to be a patient in a hospital far south of the Kaska area.